

# NEWS AND NOTES FOR FLORIDA VETERANS

Veterans Service Center, VA Regional Office  
St. Petersburg, FL

July 2005



The "News and Notes for Florida Veterans" is published monthly by the Veterans Service Center, VA Regional Office, St. Petersburg, Florida, to provide information on VA benefit programs to veterans and dependents in Florida. The material presented does not have the effect of laws or regulations. Please send questions or comments on this newsletter to Veterans Service Center, ATTN: "News and Notes," PO Box 1437, St. Petersburg, FL 33731. We do not have the resources to maintain a mailing list for distribution to individuals; however this newsletter is available on the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office web site at [www.vba.va.gov/ro/south/spete](http://www.vba.va.gov/ro/south/spete).

## **CALLS FROM RISK MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

**(RMA)** It is VA policy that all VA medical centers must use a Pre-registration Program to identify veterans who have not updated demographics and insurance information within the (at most) 180 days preceding their scheduled appointments.

Representatives of the Risk Management Association (RMA), contractor for VA, will be contacting patients who have upcoming appointments to identify and record any changes to their demographic and insurance information prior to a scheduled outpatient visit or procedure. The representative will verify the following information: veteran's complete address; home and work telephone numbers; insurance information; next of kin; emergency contact and employer information.

Veteran patients will be contacted by calls at home or by mail. Patients are not required to supply this information but are encouraged to do so as this process will help decrease rework, delays and frustrations to the patients and employees, return of undeliverable mail (prescriptions, appointment letters, etc), and reminds patients of their upcoming appointment. *Again, this is a valid VA program and it is designed to more efficiently and effectively meet our veterans' healthcare needs.*

## **VA REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE AT THE SALVATION ARMY ONE STOP RESOURCE AND OUTREACH CENTER**

1400 4th Street South, St. Petersburg, every second and fourth Thursday of the month, between 9:00 AM and 3:30 PM. They will be from the Bay Pines VA Medical Center and the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office.

## **VA AWARDS GRANT TO FLORIDA VETERANS**

**DOMICILIARY** (VA News Release, June 8, 2005)  
WASHINGTON – Making sure the Florida Veterans Home remains a comfortable residence for veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced a grant of more than \$713,000 to renovate the Robert H. Jenkins Veteran's Domiciliary. The grant will pay up to 65 percent of the cost for renovations at the State Veteran's Domiciliary in Lake City. The overall cost of the project is over \$1 million.

VA's State Home Program is a partnership with the states to acquire, construct or renovate nursing homes, domiciliary's and adult day health care facilities for veterans. The states own and operate the homes, but VA can provide up to 65 percent of the cost of approved projects. When construction is complete and inspections are satisfactory, the facilities qualify for per diem payments from VA. Information about Florida's Veterans Homes can be found on the Web at <http://www.floridavets.org/nursing/nursing.asp> or by calling 1-800-827-1000 extension 7400.

**VA'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY** VA will be 75 years old on July 21, 2005. On July 21, 1930, President Herbert Hoover signed Executive Order 5398 "Consolidation and Coordination of Governmental Activities Affecting Veterans" implementing legislation that placed under one "administration" Federal pension and other benefits programs and veterans medical facilities. This consolidated the U.S. Veterans' Bureau, the National Homes for Disabled Soldiers and the Bureau of Pension into the Veterans Administration (VA).

The United States has the most comprehensive system of assistance for veterans of any nation in the world. This benefits system traces its roots back to 1636, when the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony were at war with the Pequot Indians. The Pilgrims passed a law which stated that disabled soldiers would be supported by the colony. The Continental Congress of 1776 encouraged enlistments during the Revolutionary War by providing pensions for soldiers who were disabled. Direct medical and hospital care given to veterans in the early days of the Republic was provided by the individual States and communities. In 1811, the first domiciliary and medical facility for veterans was authorized by the Federal Government. In the 19th century, the Nation's veterans assistance program was expanded to include benefits and pensions not only for veterans, but also their widows and dependents.

After the Civil War, many State veterans homes were established. Since domiciliary care was available at all State veterans homes, incidental medical and hospital treatment was provided for all injuries and diseases, whether or not of

service origin. Indigent and disabled veterans of the Civil War, Indian Wars, Spanish-American War, and Mexican Border period as well as discharged regular members of the Armed Forces were cared for at these homes.

Congress established a new system of veterans benefits when the United States entered World War I in 1917. Included were programs for disability compensation, insurance for servicepersons and veterans, and vocational rehabilitation for the disabled. By the 1920s, the various benefits were administered by three different Federal agencies: the Veterans Bureau, the Bureau of Pensions of the Interior Department, and the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

The establishment of the Veterans Administration came in 1930 when Congress authorized the President to "consolidate and coordinate Government activities affecting war veterans." The three component agencies became bureaus within the Veterans Administration.

The VA health care system has grown from 54 hospitals in 1930, to include 171 medical centers; more than 350 outpatient, community, and outreach clinics; 126 nursing home care units; and 35 domiciliaries. The responsibilities and benefits programs of the Veterans Administration grew enormously during the following six decades. World War II resulted in not only a vast increase in the veteran population, but also in large number of new benefits enacted by the Congress for veterans of the war. The World War II GI Bill, signed into law on June 22, 1944, is said to have had more impact on the American way of life than any law since the Homestead Act more than a century ago. Further educational assistance acts were passed for the benefit of veterans of the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam Era, Persian Gulf War, and the All-Volunteer Force.

In 1973, the Veterans Administration assumed another major responsibility when the National Cemetery System (except for Arlington National Cemetery) was transferred to the Veterans Administration from the Department of the Army. The Agency was charged with the operation of the National Cemetery System, including the marking of graves of all persons in national and State cemeteries (and the graves of veterans in private cemeteries, upon request) as well and administering the State Cemetery Grants Program.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was established as a Cabinet-level position on March 15, 1989. President Bush hailed the creation of the new Department saying, "There is only one place for the veterans of America, in the Cabinet Room, at the table with the President of the United States of America."

#### **IMPORTANT DATES IN JULY**

**July 1** payments for June due

**July 4** Federal holiday - Independence Day

**July 7** last day to input change of address or establish direct deposit on compensation and pension awards in time for the 08-01-2005 payments

**July 21** last day to change or cancel direct deposit on compensation and pension awards in time for the 08-01-2005 payments

#### **VA FACILITIES ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS:**

**VA Regional Office, St. Petersburg** - PO Box 1437, St. Petersburg, FL 33731 **1-800-827-1000**

**Regional Processing Office, Atlanta, GA** (education claims) - PO Box 100022, Decatur, GA 30031-7022 **1-888-GIBILL1 (442-4551)**

Telephone number for Chapter 30 self-verifications **1-877-823-2378**

**Veterans Health Administration Toll-Free Hotline** (medical care) - **1-877-222-8387**

**VA EFT Information Hotline** (electronic funds transfer - direct deposit) **1-877-838-2778**

**VA Insurance Center, Philadelphia** (VA Insurance) - PO Box 42954, Philadelphia, PA 19101 **1-800-669-8477**

**VA Health Administration Center** (CHAMPVA and Spina Bifida health care) -

CHAMPVA inquiries: PO Box 65023, Denver, CO 80206-5023

CHAMPVA claims: PO Box 65024, Denver, CO 80206-5024  
Spina Bifida inquiries and claims: PO Box 65025, Denver, CO 80206-5025 **1-800-733-8387**

**Foreign Medical Program Office** (medical treatment abroad) -  
PO Box 65021, Denver, CO 80206-5021 **303-331-7590**

#### **National Cemeteries**

10,000 Bay Pines Blvd N, Bay Pines FL **727-398-9426**

6502 SW 102nd Ave, Bushnell FL 33513 **352-793-7740**

Naval Air Station, Pensacola FL **850-453-4108/4846**

**National Cemetery Administration Office of Memorial Programs** (headstones and markers) - 810 Vermont Ave NW, Washington, DC 20420 **1-800-697-6947**

**Loan Guaranty Eligibility Center** (certificates of eligibility)

PO Box 20729, Winston-Salem, NC 27120

**1-888-244-6711**

**Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) Unit** - Chicago VA Regional Office **1-800-829-4833**

#### **INTERNET SITES OF INTEREST:**

VA Web Site: **[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)**

VA Web Automated Reference Materials System (WARMS)  
**<http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/>**

Property Management **[www.ocwen.com](http://www.ocwen.com)**

Florida Department of Veterans Affairs:  
**[www.floridavets.org/](http://www.floridavets.org/)**

St. Pete Regional Office: **[www.vba.va.gov/ro/south/spete](http://www.vba.va.gov/ro/south/spete)**